

**A Water Rights Manual
for
Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Associations**



Utton Transboundary Resources Center

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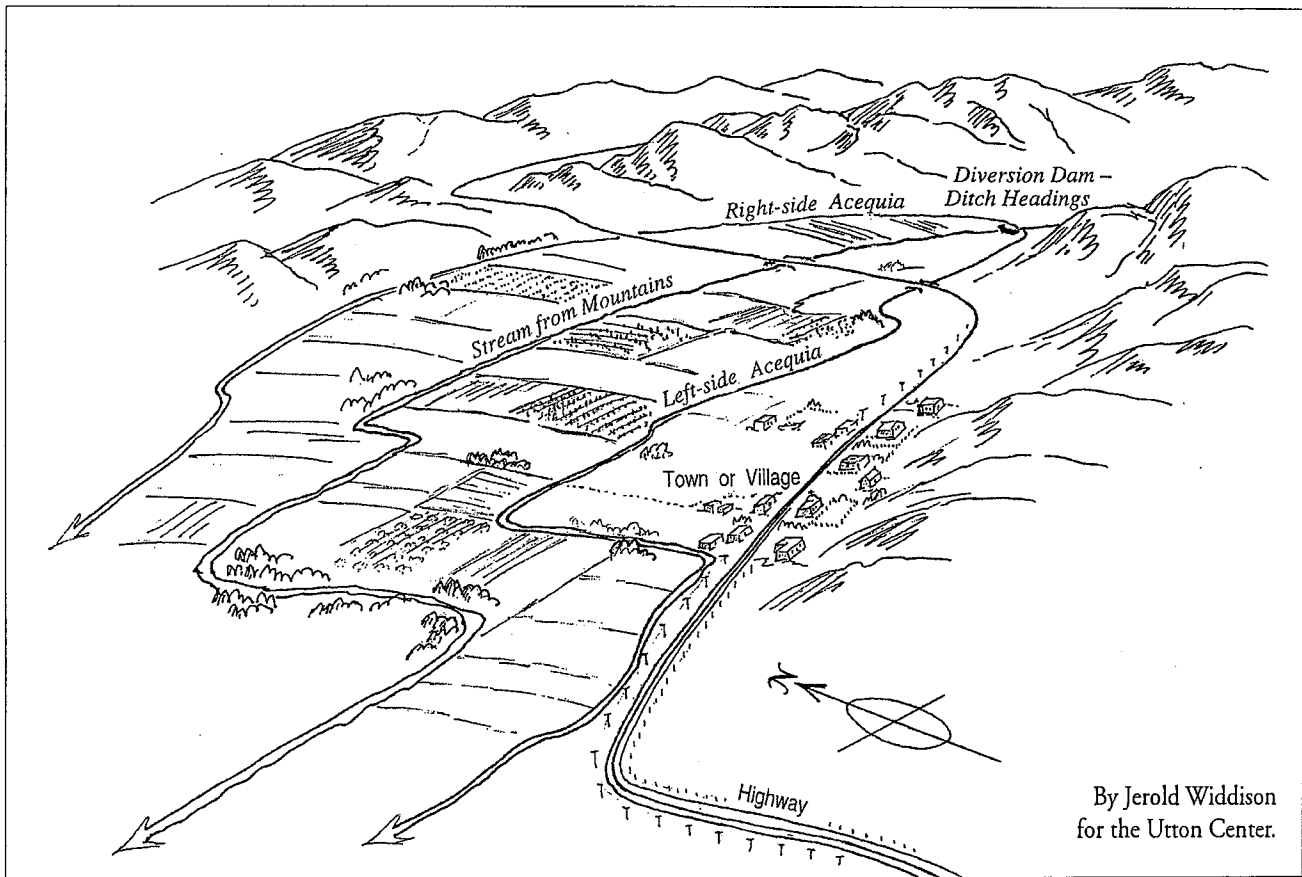
2011 Updated 2013

Acequias

Acequias are community irrigation systems in the villages and pueblos of New Mexico. They have deep roots in two ancient traditions—Pueblo Indian and Spanish. The Pueblos collected and shared water for centuries before the arrival of Spanish colonists in 1598. The Spanish settlers brought technical knowledge and institutional frameworks for governing irrigation systems, which originated in the Moors' seven-century occupation of Spain. Both traditions remain important to an understanding of New Mexico's acequia heritage and the continuing relevance of these "water democracies." Today, these traditions must meld with state law as the legislature has provided that acequias are "political subdivisions" or local governmental entities with all the attendant rights and responsibilities.

"Thousands of families continue to derive all or part of their subsistence or livelihood from their ranchitos, small-scale farms and ranches. More importantly, acequias endure in large part because of attachment to place, the miracles made possible with water and the cultural longing to continue ancestral practices and pass them on to future generations."

Paula Garcia,
Executive Director,
New Mexico Acequia
Association



By Jerold Widdison
for the Utton Center.

http://lawschool.unm.edu/nrj/volumes/48/v48_no4.php

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